

A N

Robt. Pierce

Occasional Paper,

WHEREIN THE

HONOUR of the ENGLISH

Clergy and Universities

Is Endeavour'd to be Vindicated from
the Aspersions of a late

P A M P H L E T

CALLED

Mrs. ABIGAIL

L O N D O N :

Printed by R. J. for John Nutt, near Stationers-
Hall. 1703.

Not in H2

THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

FROM THE
MIDDLE AGES TO THE
PRESENT

BY
J. A. M. J. H. T.

OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

AND
THE

ADJACENT

PARISHES

OF THE

CITY OF LONDON

AND THE

TO THE
READER.

I Have nothing to alledge in my Excuse why I appear in Print, but only that Indignation made me write. But why I do not own my Name before this little Paper, is, because my Name could not give any Reputation to it. If I have done the Reverend Clergy any Service, it is what I aim'd to do : If I have done them none, I am sorry ; I hope Somebody else will. For I think the Pamphlet which I attempt to Answer is not writ by such an inconsiderable

TO the READER.

nable Hand but it may do them Harm, as it was design'd to do; for I am sure there was Gall enough in the Ink that writ it. I beg the Gentries Pardon if I have made too bold with them. I hope I have avoided the Error of the Author of Mrs. Abigail, because tho' I have in Vindication of the Clergy hinted at the Infirmities of some, I have not been so unmannerly as to quarrel with all.

Adieu.

RE-

REFLECTIONS
UPON THE
PAMPHLET

CALLED

Mrs. ABIGAIL.

I Have read that little Pamphlet called Mrs. *Abigail*, which because it bears so hard upon the Clergy, and all along breathes so much Contempt upon that Order of Men, I cannot let it pass without some Reflections. And that which I principally resent, is, that the Author every where treats the Man in Sacred Orders in such an Ungentle and Unchristian

christian Manner, giving him such Diminishing Paultry Names and Epethites, and exposing the whole Body of the *Clergy* for the Sake of the alledg'd Miscarriages of One.

He begins his Book with a Sort of Narrative, and it is a poor Story that he tells, fitter to be the Entertainment of Women at a Gossiping, than to be either put or read in Print. For what after all is the Substance of the Matter?

The Doctor, it seems of the Author's or some other Parish, as he represents him, was a weak Man, puffed up with his New Dignity and Honour; and it seems his Wife had been a Waiting-woman, and an Upstart, and did not know how to behave herself in her New Quality. And what then? To be sure the Doctor and his Wife were to blame: It is not the First Time that sudden Promotion has made mean People proud. What a Story is this to Print, and to tell the World, or to make a Man rail at a whole Rank and Order of Men? Suppose a Dr. in Divinity to be an Ass and a Coxcomb, what, is this Cause to
abuse

abuse all those who wear that Title, and that are Dignified in the Church? Has a Doctor in Divinity no Place nor Precedence according to his Degree and Quality, because one Doctor's Wife does not know her Place, and Pouts, and is Sullen, because an Esquire's Wife is set above her? And suppose the Doctor so silly as to concern himself in the Quarrel, why may not the Doctor have his Blind Side? Or if you will, be an Ass as well as another Man? Suppose a Justice of Peace be a weak, silly, proud, Man; suppose the H. Sheriff of a County to be so; and suppose a Man of a 1000 l. a Year, descended from a long Series of Ancestors, to be so, as he may be, a Fool, and a Sot, for all his Estate or Quality: Suppose this, shall we therefore make a Jest of, and Rail at, all Justices, H. Sheriffs, and all Gentlemen of a 1000 l. a Year? Shall we say, for an Imprudence that they or your Ladies may be guilty of, that therefore they have no Place nor Honour due to them? This would be thought very unreasonable and hard: And yet this seems to be our Author's Drift in this Account of the Female Skirmish.

I would only have this Person know, that the *Clergy* in general have hitherto had the Respect paid to them according to their several Ranks and Degrees, as is their Due; and I hope will have still, notwithstanding all the Railery his Mrs. *Abigail* comes abroad so big with.

The *Clergy* of *England* are Men generally of as good Birth and Parentage as any other Sort of Men whatsoever. And if some of them were Men of low Birth, and bred Servitors in the Universities, that ought to be no Reflection upon them, when their own Deserts have raised them to the highest Stations their Profession is capable of. This is the Reward of their Piety, Learning, and Industry; and it ought no more to be envied or rail'd against, than the Rise and Advances which other Professions make in the World. How have many Merchants and Lawyers rose from a very small Condition to very great Estates and Quality in the Kingdom? And it would be but Child's Play to twit them with the Meanness of their Ancestors.

There

There is another Reflection our Author makes upon the *Clergy*, and I hope a very Untrue one ; viz. That the Gentlemen of *England* do begin to scorn to Breed up their Sons to the Ministerial Function, as if it was a Thing below them : This Insinuation indeed shews the Author's low Esteem of this Sacred Calling ; but it does not prove it to be the Opinion of our Gentry, or Nobility either, when some of the Best Families we have, have Sons, or near Relations, Educated this Way. He speaks slightly, as if indeed some of their Younger Sons might be put in Orders, as a Way of Living, but not with any other Design of Good. But I hope he will allow the Younger Sons of the Nobility and Gentry to be as well Born as the Elder ; and it is generally observed that they are better bred ; which may give Occasion to that Proverb, which very often proves true, *That the Younger Brother is the Better Gentleman.* For the Eldest Sons being doom'd to the Estate, their Lady Mothers are more tender of them, and thereby they share in a more Soft and Delicate Education,

cation, which is no Advantage either to their Parts or Manners.

Whereas the Hardships which the Younger Sons are put to, does break their Humours, gains them Experience, inures them to Labour, and happily prepares them for Business and Action, which is the only Way to make them Considerable in their After-Life.

And as to their not having their Thousands by the Year, the Deficiency is sufficiently supplied by their own Industry ; and it may be, that Son of an Honourable Family, who, as our Author would have it, stoops to take up, but more truly, is additionally honour'd by the Susception of Holy Orders, this Son often shares in those Preferments, which together with his Annuity or Portion, enables him to make near as good a Figure as his Elder Brother, and knows perhaps a great deal more Happiness ; because he knows better how to govern himself, order his Family, and manage his Estate.

And

And if the Eldest Brother happens to die, as sometimes it falls out, and the Paternal Honour and Estate falls to our Young Clergyman's Lot, he will understand the Dignity of his Holy Office better, than to think it any Misfortune or Disparagement to him in his Splendid Circumstances. So I have hear'd of a certain Earl of *Kent*, who was so Good as well as Great, that after his Honour fell to him, he did not think it below him to discharge the Offices of his *Clerical* Calling, and to Preach the Gospel. And I suppose a present Peer of this Realm does not think it any Lessening to his Temporal Dignity that he has a Spiritual Capacity belonging to him too; and that he would have been so wise as to have thought the same, if he had been only a Priest, and not a Bishop.

And as a great Number of our *Clergy* have Estates, together with their Ecclesiastical Preferments, this takes off that other Indignity thrown upon them by our Author, as if it were the general Fate of the Ministers of our Church to Marry Waiting-women,

men, or Chamber-Maids, whom he calls by the common Name of *Abigails*. And so he tells us it was from the Beginning, when the *Clergy* began first to be allow'd to Marry, the Lady's Chamber - Maid was catch'd at by them as a great Booty. And he adds that Archbishop *Cranmer* then Married an Inn-keeper's Daughter.

But I can tell our Author, that *Abigails* and Chamber-Maids, nay, Nurse-Maids and Cook-Maids too, are grown harder to be catch'd now-a-days, and are much greater Booties; and so likewise are the Daughters of the Tap; not out of Inns, but poor, blind, Ale-Houses, because some of the Top Gentry have thought good to make them their Wives, and take them in that Capacity to their Beds. I could give Instances of this upon my own Knowledge in several Esquires, and some above that Degree, that have more than One or Two Thousands a Year.

And yet I would not have this Condescension of some few Men of Quality to such
mean

mean Matches, which they have either out of Fancy, or Indiscretion, contracted, I would not this Condescension of theirs reflect any Reproach or Dishonour upon their whole Body; which is only the Error of particular Persons.

And after all it may be there is a great deal Pride and Injustice in despising a Servant, and giving them Nick-names of Derision and Scorn: For this Mrs *Abigail*, as in Contempt they call her, perhaps may be as well Born as her Mistress, and is oftentimes related to her, and more than that, perhaps generally own'd to be everyway the Finer Woman, except that for some particular Misfortunes she is forced to wear, *Ich Dien*, for her Motto, which is, *I serve*.

But to return; as mean an Employment as our Author would have that of a Minister to be, and as little as he would make their Birth and Circumstances; it is my Design to let him know that they do not all stoop to Marry Waiting-women, or Chamber-Maids: Many of them, as I said before, have
Estates

Estates Temporal and Spiritual together, which make their Expectations in Marriage suitable to themselves, and equal to any other Sort of Men. And our Gentry, and sometimes our Nobility too, have been so wise as to give their Daughters in Marriage to them with the same Fortunes as they would to any other Profession.

And it has been the Confession of some Persons of the best Quality, that it is so hard to meet with Virtue and Sobriety in another Garb, that they have thought *Clergymen* to make the best of Husbands. If I am in a Mistake it is none of my own.

And I must needs say this also of all the Gentry I have conversed with, I never yet met with any Person of Quality and Breeding, but who always treated a *Clergyman* with singular Kindness and Respect, unless he made himself Little by Flattery, or Compliance with the Vices in Fashion.

And I have found some of the Best Rank who took Delight in the Conversation of
such,

such, and who were pleased to be Resorted to by them, and Prided themselves in being reckon'd Lovers of the *Clergy*.

And whereas some few Men in Orders, who are needy of Preferment, and think it long in coming, and it may be have not Interest enough to obtain it otherwise, or other Qualifications to recommend them, some few may Court a Lady's Cousin or Waiting-woman as a ready Step to a small Rectory or Vicaridge; and if Patrons are so Corrupt as to make such By-bargains, and indirect Contracts, I do not see but it is as much the Misfortune, as the Fault, of the Inferior *Clergy*, whose Circumstances unhappily oblige them to comply with such mean Terms for a Livelihood. And yet if it had been our Constitution to have debarr'd the Sons of Poor Men from taking Orders, notwithstanding the gross Alloy which might be imputed to the First Original of their Persons, yet I say by such a Canon the Church would have been deprived of many a Golden Light, and a Beautiful Pillar.

But

But as I was speaking, if some few do Marry thus, and thus step into Preferment, must they therefore be set at Nought, and placed amongst the meanest of the People? And must for their Sakes the residue of the Sacred Tribe, who come to their Preferment with Honour, and Enjoy it with a Reputation becoming their Character, must these too be Scouted and Ridiculed, and made to herd with Farmers and Mechanicks, and their Holy Profession run down, as if it gave them no Remove above those who wear Frocks, and stand behind the Counter.

As to the Place due to a Minister's Wife I am something of the Opinion of our Author, she must take it as it falls ; because *Clergymen* formerly were not allowed to Marry, and she has no Place neither as a Bishop's, or as a Doctor's Wife, but upon Courtesie ; and if the Women would be ruled by me they should never contend for Place, but modestly take what Courtesie gives them ; and they need not desire to be better served. Only I hope if a Gentlewoman by Birth Mar-

Marries a *Clergyman*, her Place is not behind the Door because she is the Parson of the Parish's Wife.

And if she bring a Fortune, and her Husband and she together can make up 2 or 300 *l.* a Year, I hope she need not be seated among the Goodies, nor be forced to wear a Green Apron, nor a High-crown'd Hat, because her Husband wears a Rose and a Cassock.

But as for our Dr. in Divinity, doubtless he has a place, and that by Custom, or some way else, and precedence too, before all ordinary Gentlemen, tho' they are Born Gentlemen, and their Estates are better than his. Nor do Men usually take this Degree, unless they have very considerable Temporal or Spiritual Estates, or both. And if the Dr. in Divinity is not Equal in his Degree and Quality, is not Equal to any Esquire, unless he is the Son of a Peer, surely our Parliament is either Mistaken or Partial, when they Tax him in the Act for Marriages and Burials for his Quality at the same Rate that they do Esquires; and therefore if he must pay the same Duty for his Quality, as they do for theirs, it is a Sign that our

Law reckons the Quality of a Doctor equal to that of any ordinary Esquire; and if his Quality be the same, certainly his Place must be accordingly.

And tho' our Doctor should have been the Son of a Tapster, tho' not as Tapster's Son, yet as Doctor his Doctorate Entitles him to as good a Place as if he was the Eldest Son of a Knight, as well as a Sergeant at Law will take his Place according to the Degree of a Sergeant, tho' he might be the Son of a Taylor; and no Body of any Sense will dispute his Title to it, or throw in his Way his Father's Sheers or Yard-wand. And after all, the Blood of the Taylor may be as good as that of the Sergeant: For how many Men have we who hold the Plough, and Whistle to a Team of Horses, who have as good Names, and are no Doubt descended from as good Ancestors, as any in *England*?

There is one Thing more that I must tell our Author of, that his Pen has been too hasty and lavish in; he says, that Gentlemen begin

begin to think of other Ways to Breed their Sons than at the Universities, those Sinks of Lewdness and Debauchery.

I hardly ever heard any one defame the Universities, but I suspected them either to labour under the Prejudice of Dissenting Principles, or that they never lived in either of the Universities; or else that they had been Rakish, and Debauch'd themselves when they were there; and because they would not submit to Discipline, their Governours were forced to remove them from their Colleges; and so being disgusted, they take this Way to be revenged upon the Universities. Or it may be, a Father whose Purse has smarted by the Prodigality of his Son, the Loss of so much dear Blood may make the Old Gentleman gape against that Naughty Place where the Extravagant Youth was Educated.

I lived an University Life several Years, and tho' I had my Follies there, yet I cannot blame the Discipline which I lived under: But it was so good, that there were as few Disorders as could be supposed, where there was such a Concourse of Youth. And the worst People

we had were such who came from Universities abroad, or Private Academies at Home. So that I am apt to think, if our Gentry take that Course our Author speaks of, they will not much Mend themselves by the Change. Let any one tell me of any Place for the Education of Youth where they shall be intirely safe, and not capable of being debauch'd if they have a Mind to't, and I will give up the Cause. But upon Experience I will say, That a Young Man cannot be put abroad to any Place of Education where he shall be safer than in the Universities ; nay, not if he is bound an Apprentice in a Country Town.

As to what our Author speaks of the Inns of Court, I wish those Societies do not more deserve the Character our Bold Author gives to the Schools of the Prophets. And I fear those who go Sober from the Universities when they come to Town, find a greater Liberty to be ruin'd than they Enjoy'd before. This is certain, where Young Men are, there will be Lewdness, if they are that Way disposed, in Spight of the Strictest Governours. I believe the Tutors of Private Academies have Reason to Complain of this, as well as Tutors and Magistrates in the Universities. And

And as for Gentlemens Sons, who only do, as it were, make a Pass thro' the Universities to the Inns of Court, and design no Profession but that of Gentlemen, they are generally the most Unruly Members in the University; building upon their Estates, they take it Ill to be Controuled; and yet when they come to Sense, and see their Mismanagement of themselves, then they Blame the Universities that they are no stricter; and often, for their Sakes, as well as by their Mouths, those Excellent Mysteries of Good Literature undergo Reproach.

As for the Reflection which is made upon those who lead an University Life, whom he call's Petty, Starch'd, Fellows, the Dregs and Offals of Monkery, who live upon Chops of Mutton, I wou'd have our Angry Writer know, that most of the Fellows of Colleges, in either University, are Masters of more Wisdom and useful Knowledge, are more Men, and more Gentlemen, live in more Respect, and after a Neater Manner, and are more Capable of Serving their Sovereign and their Country in any Capacity, than many of our Antient Country Esquires, whose Conversation is most in their Stable, their Kennel, and
their

their Hen-roost, tho' they may have a very good Estate, which it is their Fortune to be Born to, and none of their Merits which has procured it them. For as one answer'd for himself, who had worthily rais'd his own Fortune, when he was told that he was but a Carrier's Son, replied, If some Men had been Carriers Sons, they themselves would never have rais'd their Condition higher, but might have been Carriers still. It is Stuff to boast of a long Series of Ancestors where there is nothing else to recommend Men : Surely this Author never read the Poem call'd, *The True-born Englishman* ; for there is not an Hostler, nor a Pedlar, but what is descended from a long Series of Ancestors of one Kind or other. And so no less is every Game-Cock, Race-Horse, or Setting-Dog.

And as for an Estate which Men make such a Buffleabout, it must be own'd that Wisdom, Virtue, and good Manners, do more advantageously distinguish one Man from another, than either Titles, Land, or Money, unless those more Valuable Qualifications go together with them.

I Honour a Gentleman, and I have Reason
to

to do so, as much as anyone, if he is so by his Education and Temper, as well as by his Birth and Estate.

And in short, I think no Man makes a worse Figure than a Man of Title and Estate that wants both Sense and Manners, let him be either Layman or Ecclesiastick; for I own the latter may be a worthless Wretch as well as the former.

To proceed: When our Author calls the Fellows and Scholars of Colleges Almsmen, the Gentlemen of *England* have sure better Thoughts of those Endowments, when they make all the Application they can to those who have the Disposal of such Preferments, that they may get their Sons in to reap the Benefit of such Foundations. Nay, the Nobility themselves have not scorn'd to let their Sons very frequently wear the Livery, and eat the Commons, of such Alms-Houses. And I believe our Country Esquire of a Long Descent, and near a 1000 *l.* a Year, would not scruple to have a Son of his, if he were his Eldest, to be an Almsman upon one of these Foundations, if the Young Spark had Deserts, or his Father's Interest, enough to recommend him. And

And as for the Members living High in these Colleges, to the Envy of the Country Gentlemen ; I know no Reason why Gentlemen, who have a Liberal Maintenance reach'd out unto them by the Generosity of their Benefactors, should not live like Gentlemen, and answerable to their Income.

But I know it is the Humour of some of the Gentry, who have narrow Souls, and sometimes narrow Circumstances, they grutch to see any whom they think below them to live better than themselves, especially the *Clergy*. They think their Wives, their Children, and their Houses, are all drest too Fine ; they think they fare and drink too well, and every Thing they have is too good for them. And therefore this Kind Author, to keep them Humble, would have the Poor to be maintain'd out of their Inches, and so would have them live like Almshouses in the Country, as well as in the University. He quotes Councils, Statutes, and Canons, for this ; it is a special Saving Doctrine for the Laity to make Use of to save their own Estates from paying Levies to the Poor : But Thanks be to God, the Law and Custom of our Land does make a more Just and Reasonable Provision for those that want Relief.

As

As to the Charity of the *Clergy*, I think it need not be compell'd; there are no Sort of Men for the Proportion of their Estates do more good, relieve more Poor, both with Meat and Money, and are more ready, to their great Expence, to promote any Charitable Design, than they. And generally speaking they live as Hospitably as the Orders of our Church require of them.

Indeed the Gentry do in some Places take Care to keep them low, either by Private Contracts, when they present them, or holding them to Poor and Mean Rates afterwards, to the unjust Lessening of their Livings. And some Places are small of their own Nature. And here I am sure the *Clergyman* can do but Little for the Poor, or his own Family; but must live in Primitive Obscurity, before the Churches Patrimony was either settled, or allowed of. Now if such a Minister, notwithstanding his mean Circumstances, shall live High, and run in Debt, he deserves to be censured, and must think to leave his Widow in Distress, and his Children in Beggary; and the higher they lived before, the less Pity they will have now.

And yet I cannot see but the Gospel allows

D

a Minister as well as any other Man, comfortably to enjoy what God has given him. And since the Providence of God has found the *Clergy* generally a handſom Maintainance from the Tythes of the Church, and oftentimes Plentiful Eſtates of their own, that many *Clergymen*, below the Degree of Doctors, do for Temporal Eſtates equal any of the Ordinary Gentry, I ſay, ſince it is ſo, there is no Reaſon why a *Clergyman*, his Wife and Family, may not bear a Port ſuitable to their Eſtate and Condition; and if he can afford it, keep his Coach too as well as his Neighbour Eſquire.

And as for taking Care of his Widow, I ſuppoſe ſuch of the *Clergy* as I am now ſpeaking of, can, and do, leave their Wives good Joyntures, no Objects of Charity, but in a Condition to communicate to the Neceſſitous, even after their Huſbands Deceafe. And if after his Death they are forced to fall lower in their Circumſtances, I hope it is the ſame with all Widows, who from enjoying the Accommodations of the whole Eſtate, are reduced to their Thirds, or a Joynture. And if the Miniſter's Wife, when ſhe is a Widow, cannot keep Coach, nor Two or Three Maids, as ſhe did before, the Caſe is the ſame with many a Lady.

I have next to consider the Unworthy Reflections which this Author makes upon the Office of the Ministry, and tells us, that the Priest deserves no Respect upon the Account of his Function more than any other Profession does. He ridicules the Spiritual Druggery, as he calls it, which the Chaplain undergoes in a Gentleman's Family, which speaks our Author's Libertine Principles, and what little Regard he has to the Performance of the Duties of Religion, and the Worship of God, in Private Houses. And I am afraid too many, who out of State keep Domestick Chaplains, are ready to look upon the Divine Services discharged by them, to be but an ungrateful Druggery, which makes them treat their Man in Orders but little better than a common Servant, and therefore, tho' they give them Leave to sit down below the Salt at their own Tables, yet in Token of their Servitude require them to rise at Second Course. But I shall say no more on this Head, it is better done by the Ingenious Mr. Collier in one of his *Essays*, to which I refer my Author and my Reader.

In the next Place, we find the *Clergy's* Interpreting of Scripture, their being God's Ambassadors, their making a Mystery of Religion, and their Power of Absolution, to be made a Jest, and Matter of Sport. D 2 As

As for the Difference which is amongst Expositors in their Interpretation of Scripture; they may differ in some difficult Places, and all of them seeing through a different Light, may have Reasons for their various Sences: But yet when they come to treat of the plain Truths contain'd in Holy Writ, such as we are most concern'd to know, all Divines who are Learned and Pious, tho' they treat of these Subjects in a different Method, yet they agree together in the Main: And they have a Concord and Harmony in all their Practical Discourses, which are necessary to the Ignorant, and useful to all. — And because it is their Business more than others to study the Holy Scriptures, they may be allow'd more than others to understand them: And they have an Ability, as well as an Authority, above others, to open and unfold them to the People. And because it is their Office to be Helpful in a peculiar Manner to the Souls of Men, in Order to their Present and Future Happiness, therefore tho' our Author would not allow a Minister that Honour, yet our Saviour and his Apostles tell us, that a Minister that rules well the People committed to his Charge, and is Diligent in attending upon the Word and Doctrine, is worthy of double Honour; and

and that he ought to be esteem'd very highly for his Work. And whoever is Obedient to his Spiritual Pastor for Christ's Sake, will be so far from depriving of him of the Respect which is his due, that he will be ready to pay him more than he need.

As for their making Christianity a Myſtery, ſo are the Sacraments and many of the Doctrines of it, and the Miniſters of the Goſpel are called Stewards of the Myſteries of God.

But as for making the plain Fundamental Principles of Religion dark and myſterious, which the Word of God has not done ſo, I have not met with any ſuch Prieſt, and I believe our Author will find it hard to give an Example.

We abhor, and do not pretend to, the Tricks which the Prieſts of the Church of Rome have practiſed to gain themſelves an Awe amongſt the Illiterate People. But yet as much as our Author ridicules the Power of Abſolution lodged in the Paſtors of the Church of Chriſt; as if nobody regarded the Force thereof, unleſs a Malefactor at the Gallows; it is a Sign our Author is Ignorant of the Senſe of the Antient Churches, and of our Church in this Caſe. Our Prieſts pretend not from themſelves to have any Power to forgive Sins, which none but
God

God can do, but they have a Power, and a particular Commission from Christ, to declare unto Penitent Sinners the Grace and Mercy of God for the Sake of Jesus Christ. And in this Sense we understand that Place which speaks what Authority they have in that behalf. *Whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose Sins ye retain, they are retained.* They may say, and that from Scripture Authority, if a Person repents, his Sins are forgiven him; and they may declare that there is no Forgiveness as long as Men continue Impenitent, and live in their Sins.

As to the Form of Absolution used in the Office of the Visitation of the Sick, it is deliver'd more Authoritatively than any of the other, and that to be sure for the greater Comfort and Support of a humble Penitent upon his Sick or Dying Bed; where all the Priest pretends to do, is, to declare; and tho' he says, I absolve, yet it is not in his own Name, but in the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through the Purchase of Christ, *i. e.* according to his Mind revealed in his Word, and according to the Tenour and Conditions of the Gospel Covenant; and these Qualifications of Faith and Repentance are express'd in the Form of that Absolution.

And

And if any Priest should pretend to absolve in any other Sense, he would deserve, as our Author writes, to be stoned by the People.

But since the Word of Consolation is committed to the Minister's Trust, and he is the Steward and Dispencer thereof, in Behalf of those who are wearied and burthen'd with their Sins, why he should be Censured for acting according to his Commission, I cannot tell.

And as Ministers are Stewards, so the Scriptures declare them to be Ambassadors too : And the Embassy or Message which they are sent upon, is to deliver the Doctrine of Reconciliation, and to perswade Men in Christ's stead that they would leave the Error of their Ways, and be reconciled unto God, and to publish the Mercy and Good-will of God, that he is willing for his Son's Sake to be reconciled unto them.

And methinks when they come upon this welcome Errand, they ought not to be slighted, but received with Love and Honour, and Esteem'd as the Servants and Messengers of the most High. *For how beautiful are the Feet of those who preach the Gospel, and bring to the World the Glad-tidings of Peace ?*

And if they keep to their Rule, and the Instructions which are given them in the Word, they will not oppose or contradict one another, but

but all of them carry on and promote the same Evangelical Design, the Salvation of those who are committed to their Charge.

And thus have I done with these Aspersions of this Unkind Author upon the *Clergy* and their Office. I should not have given my self and others this Trouble, but that I thought this *Pamphlet* of his falling into the Hands of Persons disposed to ridicule the *Clergy*, it might tend to encrease that Evil-spreading Humour which ought to receive a Check.

And whereas some take the Liberty to speak, and what is more, to write, to the Reproach and Contempt of that Sacred and Honourable Employment, I think it is fit some should speak and write in its Just Praise and Vindication. I am sensible if Loose and Ill-designing Men could bring this Holy Calling into a general Disgrace, the Christian Offices which are perform'd by this Order of Men would soon be brought into Disgrace too; and then Farewel Religion.

F I N I S.